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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**PENNSYLVANIA RESIDENT SENTENCED FOR SELLING
VENEMOUS REPTILE**

PRESS RELEASE

Susan W. Brooks, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Indiana, announced that GEORGE DIAZ, JR., 29, Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, was fined and sentenced to probation today by U.S. Magistrate Judge Kennard Foster following his guilty plea to a Lacey Act Violation. This case was the result of a year and a half long investigation by the United States Fish and Wildlife in Indiana, Ohio and Michigan, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, and Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

The Lacey Act is a federal law that incorporates and makes it illegal to violate state statutes regarding a wide variety of endangered and protected wildlife and venomous reptiles. In this case, law enforcement conducted an investigation that focused on individuals who

bought and sold venomous reptiles at the Midwest Reptile Show held periodically at the Indiana State Fairgrounds. DIAZ was one such individual who sold a venomous reptile, a King Cobra snake, for \$400 to an undercover officer. DIAZ had sold the snake to the undercover officer in the parking lot away from the crowd of people at the show, and had previous discussions where he admitted knowing King Cobra snakes were illegal to transport and sell. Several dozen people were arrested in several states from this investigation.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Gayle L. Helart, who prosecuted the case for the government, Magistrate Judge Foster fined DIAZ \$1500 and placed him on 1 year probation.

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